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Assessment of progress made on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests

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Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report consolidates and summarizes information voluntarily submitted by 55 States on actions taken and progress made towards implementing the forest instrument, the four global objectives on forests and the contribution of forests and sustainable forest management towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the report draws on data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and provides an overview of collaborative activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Forum on Forests and FAO, including capacity-building workshops on national reporting, preparations for the reporting format of the tenth session of the Forum and pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument.

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** Issuance of the present report was delayed owing to the need to include updated information.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 7/1, in particular paragraph 1 (c) of the annex thereto, according to which the Forum is to hold a discussion at each session on the achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (hereafter referred to as the forest instrument). In paragraph 3 of its resolution on forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication, adopted at its ninth session, the Forum requested the Forum secretariat to develop a streamlined reporting format for its tenth session on the implementation of the forest instrument and balanced reporting on the four global objectives on forests, in consultation with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (see E/2011/42).

2. In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Forum invited Member States and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to initiate and support additional pilot projects and to continue to support the existing pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument in Ghana, Liberia, Nicaragua and the Philippines. Donor countries and other countries in a position to do so and members of the Partnership were also encouraged to make voluntary financial contributions to the Forum Trust Fund to enable the Forum secretariat to effectively assist, upon request, in the preparation of voluntary national reports. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was also invited to consider how it could further incorporate into the Forum's request for streamlined reporting on the state of the world's forests, including through the global forest resources assessment programme, the elements of the forest instrument and its global objectives on forests.

3. The present report draws from the voluntary national information submitted by 55 States, in accordance with the reporting template developed through extensive consultations with Government representatives and international experts during the period 2011-2012. The consultations were conducted jointly by the Forum secretariat and FAO through regional capacity-building workshops,[1] with the participation of 90 Forum and forest resources assessment national focal points from 60 countries. The agreed format was intended to complement other forest-related reporting processes and to provide data on the contributions of forests and sustainable forest management to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Global Forest Resources Assessment and from the pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument, founded by the Governments of Germany and Japan and implemented by FAO, were also incorporated into the report.

II. Background

4. In December 2007, the General Assembly adopted the forest instrument, as set out in the annex to its resolution 62/98, in order to (a) strengthen political commitment and action at all levels to implement effectively sustainable management of all types of forests and to achieve the shared global objectives on

[1] The workshops held in Bangkok (10-12 October 2011), Nairobi (13-15 December 2011), Accra (6-8 February 2012), Beirut (11-13 April 2012) and Santiago (18-20 April 2012) were jointly organized by the Forum secretariat and FAO.

forests; (b) enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability; and (c) provide a framework for national action and international cooperation.

5. In section V, paragraph 5, of the forest instrument (resolution 62/98, annex), Member States reaffirmed their commitment to work globally, regionally and nationally towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests by 2015. Moreover, they identified, in paragraphs 6 and 7, 25 national policies and measures and 19 actions related to international cooperation and the means of implementation in order to achieve the instrument's purpose. In paragraphs 8 and 9, they addressed the monitoring and assessment of progress towards achieving that purpose and the need for voluntary national reports as part of regular reporting on the instrument to the Forum.

6. Accordingly, countries have undertaken actions and have expressed increased interest in external cooperation to support their efforts to implement the forest instrument. In that regard, FAO, in close coordination with the secretariat of the Forum and with support from the Governments of Germany and Japan, has been working to improve the understanding by countries of the instrument. FAO, in cooperation with the Government of Germany and the National Forest Programme Facility, has supported pilot projects on the implementation of the forest instrument in four countries, starting with Ghana in 2008. By 2011, three new pilot project countries had emerged: Liberia, Nicaragua and the Philippines.

7. The four pilot project countries carried out participatory assessments of their own situations vis-à-vis the 25 national policies and measures agreed in the forest instrument. Such assessments involved a large number of different stakeholders at the local and national levels. Based on those assessments, each pilot country identified a number of policies and measures requiring priority action, according to areas where country performance was perceived to be weak. With support from the project, the countries engaged in capacity-building and other key catalytic activities to address the priorities. They also developed monitoring and evaluation systems for the implementation of the forest instrument. In addition, as at the end of 2012, technical and financial support had been given to China, Gabon, India, Mongolia, Nigeria, Swaziland and Zambia, following their expressed interest in receiving support for implementation of the instrument.[2]

8. In 2012, China and India organized national workshops with technical and financial support from FAO for capacity development in respect of the implementation and monitoring of the forest instrument. China established 12 pilot sites in different parts of the country to demonstrate and monitor its implementation.

9. Nigeria and Zambia are planning to hold national workshops for capacity development in January 2013. FAO is also supporting Gabon, Mongolia and Swaziland in organizing capacity development events.

10. Based on the experiences of the pilot countries, a capacity development module was designed to increase awareness of the instrument and to facilitate its

[2] Further information concerning the four pilot projects is available from http://www.fao.org/forestry/nfp/78462/en/.

implementation and monitoring at the national level. The module was used at the five regional capacity-building workshops organized jointly by the secretariat of the Forum and FAO in 2011-2012. Further cooperation by the secretariat and FAO is expected with countries in 2013 on capacity-building workshops and projects related to reporting and the forest instrument.

III. Procedural aspects of reporting to the Forum at its tenth session

11. At the time of reporting, the 55 submissions received by the Forum secretariat were from Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Portugal, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, the Slovak Republic, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and the State of Palestine.[3] This is the highest number of reports ever presented to the Forum.[4]

12. Only 10 of the countries submitted their national reports by the required deadline (30 September 2012). Most were received after the deadline, some in January 2013. Reports varied in length and the degree of detail. The secretariat therefore had limited time for a thorough analysis and synthesis, and the present report should be read with those limitations in mind. It should be regarded as an overview of the status of the implementation of the forest instrument and its four global objectives on forests.

IV. Summary of the national reports submitted to the Forum at its tenth session

A. Overview of the status of implementation of the forest instrument

13. The adoption of the forest instrument in 2007 reinforced the global commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest as the overarching principle for forest policy at both the national and international levels.

14. Although negotiated and adopted more than six years ago, the provisions of the instrument are still highly relevant. Various activities and actions reported by countries follow the provisions set out in the forest instrument. In monitoring the provisions and measures contained in the instrument, countries have also tracked progress in implementing the four global objectives on forests.

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[3] Although the secretariat received 55 reports, 2 were not in the reporting format for the tenth session. Therefore, most of the information is based on the responses of 53 countries. Where feasible, the information from all the reports has been aggregated and used in preparing the present document.

[4] All the national reports are available from the Forum website, http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff10.html.

15. Countries are beginning to recognize the full potential of the instrument and its four global objectives and have taken these into account in the design and implementation of forest policies. This has been demonstrated in the various outputs of the activities of the Forum secretariat and FAO on implementation of and reporting on the forest instrument through the participation and engagement of countries in regional workshops and the interest that has been expressed in the pilot projects. In addition to the six official languages of the United Nations, the forest instrument has been translated by the following into their national languages: Afghanistan (Dari and Pashtu), Albania, Finland, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Slovak Republic, Sri Lanka (Sinhala), Suriname and Turkey.

B. Forest instrument and the global objectives on forests

Global objective 1: reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation

16. Some progress has been made towards reversing the loss of forest cover at the global level. According to the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, the world's total forest area is just over 4 billion hectares, which in equivalent to 31 per cent of total land area. While the rate of deforestation is slowing, it is still high, from 16 million hectares per year in the 1990s to an average of approximately 13 million hectares per year over the past decade. The highest deforestation rates and loss of forest cover remain in South America and Africa. Gains in forest cover have occurred in temperate and boreal zones, mainly thorough afforestation and the natural expansion of forests.

17. The total forest area of the 55 States that submitted reports to the tenth session of the Forum is approximately 1.5 billion hectares, which constitutes just over 37 per cent of the global forest cover. The aggregate data for those reporting countries show a positive trend in achieving global objective 1 since there has been a 0.3 per cent increase in forest cover between 2005 and 2010, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessments prepared for those years.

18. The progress in reversing the loss of forest cover is reflected in the numerous actions taken by the reporting countries towards the achievement of global objective 1. Many of the actions have been prompted by international commitments agreed through the United Nations Forum on Forests. Developments and/or enhancements of national forest programmes, national forest policies and forest legislation are clear examples of that trend. Since the adoption of the forest instrument in 2007, a majority of the reporting States (46 out of 53) have undertaken concerted efforts to strengthen their forest-related legislations, including law enforcement and governance in support of sustainable forest management.

Strengthening political commitment to sustainable forest management

19. Increased attention and interest in forests, at many levels, has been reflected in the various commitments of the reporting countries to sustainable forest management, in particular through the development and revisions of national forest policies, legislation and/or national forest programmes. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, 75 per cent of the world's forests are covered by national forest programmes. This trend is supported by the information provided by

the reporting countries, 75 per cent of which indicated the existence of national forest programmes and nearly 90 per cent of which reported having specific national forest policies and laws.

20. Cross-sectoral cooperation between forests and other sectors has been reinforced and increasingly recognized as a crucial means to address and achieve national and international objectives related to forests. Almost all of the States (50 out of 53) reported having inter-institutional mechanisms for cross-sectoral cooperation so as to achieve sustainable forest management. The agriculture sector and issues related to climate change were the areas in which the countries reported most cooperation. Reported actions included the establishment of interministerial, inter-agency steering committees, and platforms and advisory councils that build participatory channels for discussion among relevant stakeholders. Several countries reported on interministerial strategies to manage natural resources as a whole, rather than forest resources specifically. The submitted reports indicate that forests issues are becoming part of a broader agenda and/or strategies related to the management of natural resources.

21. Actions and measures taken by countries to attain global objective 1 include the following:

(a) Canada practises sustainable forest management and requires by law that all forests harvested on public land must be successfully regenerated;

(b) Germany has passed laws at the federal and subnational levels demanding obligatory compensatory afforestation in the case of conversion or degradation of forests;

(c) Since 2009, China has implemented subsidy policies in support of forest tending, afforestation and the production of quality seeds. Through large-scale afforestation and forest resources protection, China has realized a large growth in forest cover, increasing by 61,688,400 hectares its total forest area between 1992 and 2012;

(d) India has also launched a programme to increase its forest cover through afforestation and agroforestry systems;

(e) Liberia has developed and is currently implementing a reforestation policy;

(f) Myanmar has designated a protected area system and an ongoing process for timber certification schemes in order to reverse its loss of forest cover and to reduce forest degradation;

(g) Japan has implemented various technology transfers and human resources developments in afforestation and forest management. It has revised its Forest Act to support the revitalization of forests and forestry and implemented measures to increase the capacity of forests to sequester carbon;

(h) Nepal has been implementing various forest-related programmes to reverse its loss of forest cover;

(i) Niger aims to increase its forest cover by about 15 per cent through its national forestry plan for 2012-2021;

(j) In 2012, Norway initiated a strategy on afforestation and increased reforestation, the protection of forests and forest land, the increased use of bioenergy and the increased use of wood to replace less climate-friendly energy sources and construction materials;

(k) As a result of South Africa's strategy on afforestation, 100,000 hectares of potential natural lands were identified for afforestation purposes;

(l) Togo aims to enable the afforestation of 5,000 hectares of forests per year with its new national forest policy;

(m) Every year, the forest area in Ukraine is increased by between 35,000 and 40,000 hectares;

(n) A number of countries, including Australia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guyana, Japan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea and Suriname, reported having bilateral agreements and/or afforesation actions related to the enhanced mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+).

Forest law enforcement and governance

22. Three quarters of the reporting countries have amended their forest legislation since 2007. Significant efforts have been taken by countries to combat illegal trade in forest products. The most commonly reported actions, for example, by Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Italy, Jamaica and Liberia, were linked to implementation of European Union legislation, such as the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan, the new European Union timber regulation, and the voluntary partnership agreements between non-European Union countries and the European Union.

23. Several countries provided examples of forest law enforcement and measures taken to enhance the trade of legal forest products. The United States reported on the amended Lacey Act (2008), which prohibits trade in wood and plant products taken in violation of domestic and international law. The United States also highlighted its engagement with the Experts Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the signing of bilateral agreements with several countries to combat illegal logging. Support for the wildlife crime working group of the International Criminal Police Organization was also mentioned.

24. Ghana reported on establishing legality assurance system regulations to guide implementation of the system and the issuance of licences under the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan. Similarly, Nicaragua reported on regulatory mechanisms and actions to control the illegal traffic of forest products. Myanmar, Saint Lucia and Sri Lanka highlighted recent amendments in their forest legislation on forest protection.

25. The reporting countries also highlighted bilateral cooperation on forest law enforcement. Viet Nam, for example, reported on its cooperation with the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, China and the Republic of Korea. Nepal reported on the launch of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network, opening a new chapter in regional cooperation in South Asia for strengthening wildlife law enforcement.

26. In other reporting countries, protocols have been developed to determine the legality of timber and timber products found in the market. The harvesting of timber in the Philippines, for example, must be approved by Government agencies and be compliant with the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. South Africa has been monitoring and controlling timber moving through its borders, in accordance with the Convention. Papua New Guinea is currently developing traceability and verification systems, and Japan is developing forest monitoring technology using satellite data and information exchanges with partner countries for a wood/log traceability system. Japan has also provided financial support to the International Tropical Timber Organization on illegal logging activities.

Global objective 2: enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people

Economic benefits of forests

27. From a purely economic point of view, timber, in particular industrial roundwood, remains the main viable source of income from forests. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, the total value of forest product removals in 2005 was $121.9 billion, of which 71 per cent were from industrial roundwood, 15 per cent were non-wood forest products and 14 per cent were from fuel wood. According to the Statistics Division of FAO, the global export of all wood products, including all roundwood and processed products, in 2011 was around $246 billion. Globally, however, the social and environmental benefits of forests are gaining importance, as reflected in current national and international policy dialogues and the national reports on forests.

28. Globally, the area of forest for roundwood production, as a primary function, has been slowly but steadily decreasing, and countries are embarking on more processed and semi-processed forest products to generate more value-added goods and services. This has generated improved conditions for forest-based employment.

29. Moreover, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, there has been an increase at the global level in the area of forests within protected areas, in forests managed for conservation of biological diversity (by almost 2 per cent between 2000 and 2010) and in forests managed for the provision of social services and cultural functions, which currently constitute around 3.7 per cent of the world's forests.

30. While timber products are easier to quantify in economic terms, putting a value on and calculating the revenue from the social and environmental benefits of forests has remained a challenge for many countries. Nevertheless, recently there have been cases that indicate progress towards natural capital accounting to measure the total value of natural assets through, for example, payments for ecosystem services. In that regard, a number of the reporting countries described the potential of payments for ecosystem services to enhance the economic, social and environmental benefits of forests. Over 30 per cent of the reporting States (16 out of 53) established some sort of mechanisms for payments for ecosystem services.

31. Seven countries were able to provide estimated figures related to payments for ecosystem services. The highest value for 2010 was reported by Costa Rica ($10 billion) and Japan ($310 million). Costa Rica reported on its national

programme of payments for environmental services, whose primary source of funding comes from a tax on fuels. Most prefectures in Japan introduced their own local tax systems to generate funding for sustainable forest management (forest environment tax). Nicaragua's national legislation established payments for ecosystem services related to water resources. Portugal reported having private sector voluntary agreements that provide payments for ecosystem services but not an established mechanism at the country level. The Prime Minister of Viet Nam recently issued an executive order for developing a policy on payments for ecosystem services, which currently focuses on hydropower plants, water and ecotourism. Papua New Guinea approved pilot projects to be developed under a REDD+ project that emphasizes conservation with carbon trading as the main commodity.

32. Several countries indicated that while there were many definitions, valuation methodologies and studies on payments for ecosystem services, there were not any internationally agreed terms and/or methodologies. In addition, data at the national level is scattered. Countries mostly reported that payments for ecosystem services schemes included compensations for agreed restrictions on land use, environmental taxes and schemes related to REDD+.

33. Austria developed compensation contracts on forests in protected areas between the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and private forest owners. Currently, there are 199 contracts amounting to $1.1 million annually for compensation. In Germany, the payments for ecosystem services measures are under the responsibility of the Laender (federal states), but data was unavailable at that level. Canada is exploring a comprehensive suite of services provided by nature, including forests, to ensure linkages in policy discussions and management decisions.

34. Ukraine reported that its State Forest Resources Agency was in the process of introducing the concept of "close-to-nature" forest management aimed at growing more persistent and productive uneven-aged mixed forests and increasing the use of shelterwood felling systems based on environmentally friendly harvesting technologies.

35. Japan reported on a number of institutional and management measures for enhancing the benefits of forests, such as efficient and stable forestry management bodies, coordination and consolidation of forestry operation units, and low-cost forest management systems based on a combination of forest road networks and high-performance forestry machinery use and the development of human resources in the forestry sector.

Livelihoods of forest-dependent people

36. Actions reported by countries to attain global objective 2 included programmes, projects and other activities benefiting forest communities and/or the creation of jobs in small forest-based enterprises. Owing to its decentralized nature, the forest sector provides benefits to those who are often the most vulnerable and in need, namely rural populations. Many Governments have come up with programmes, schemes and plans promoting rural empowerment and poverty eradication, and forests are part of that portfolio.

37. The role of forests and sustainable forest management in the fight against poverty has been increasingly recognized. Almost half (25 out of 53) of the reporting States revised their national poverty eradication plans and strategies in order to incorporate the elements of sustainable forest management, with a view to providing socioeconomic benefits to rural populations and local communities. Three quarters (40 out of 53) of the reporting States stated that their national forest programmes and relevant policies and strategies contributed to poverty eradication.

38. In the past few years, 600 home nurseries that employed rural communities were created in Afghanistan. Ghana launched a national forest plantation programme to implement a planting target of 10,000 hectares per year, with a view to generating employment for 10,000 people in rural areas. In order to accelerate afforestation, increase vegetation cover, and improve the ecological conditions in rural areas, China launched a project on returning farmland to forests, which benefited more than 32 million rural households, or 124 million farmers, and provided subsidies that accounted for 15 per cent of rural household income, on average.

39. South Africa developed and implemented successful programmes for small forest owners and, as a result, there have been about 2,000 new small growers of forests each year.

40. Over 90 per cent (49 out of 53) of the reporting States indicated that the user rights for indigenous peoples and local communities were recognized by law and that indigenous peoples/local communities were benefiting from the goods and services produced by forests.

41. The rural communities adjacent to State forests are supported by and are beneficiaries of existing forest policies and practices to varying degrees. Indigenous peoples and local communities are often involved in the management of forest resources. There has been a gradual shift from the traditional custodian role of forest departments to a more participatory approach in forest protection, conservation and development. For example, in Bangladesh, Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines and the State of Palestine, communities are involved in the protection of forest biodiversity and in receiving benefits from forests for their livelihoods.

42. Local communities in Albania have been benefiting from a national biocarbon fund, based on reforestation activities and the rehabilitation of vegetation. Grenada's approach is to facilitate the sustainable livelihood opportunities provided by forest-protected areas without depleting the natural resources. Ghana and Madagascar have underlined the role of forests in ecotourism activities.

43. Côte d'Ivoire, India, Jamaica, Myanmar and Viet Nam reported on programmes for livelihood stabilization and security, especially for people who live near forests and/or in remote areas.

44. Turkey reported support for forest villagers and their livelihoods by providing individual and cooperative loans. So far, more than 400,000 families have been provided with loans worth over $1 billion.

Global objective 3: increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

Protection of forests

45. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, the area of forests in protected areas worldwide was around 460 million hectares, which equals 12.5 per cent of the global forest area. The area of forests in protected areas increased from 1990 to 2010 by 94 million hectares.

46. The increasing trend towards protecting forest areas is reflected among the reporting countries whose protected areas constitute around 13 per cent of the total forest area. There was a 4.16 per cent increase in forests in protected areas between 2005 and 2010.

47. Many countries reported on the enactment of new or amendments of existing legislation related to the protection of natural resources and/or the establishment of new protection systems.

48. Several countries, such as Albania, Ghana, Japan, Nepal, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Myanmar, Suriname, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Ukraine, reported increased protected areas comprising forests, and many provided quantified targets for increasing such areas and dates to achieve those targets.

49. Canada reported increasing the number and total area of protected forests. As at 2011, 9.9 per cent of Canada's land area has been protected. In the past 20 years, the total area protected has increased by 95 per cent and in the past 5 years it has increased by 19 per cent. Under federal jurisdiction, over 50 million hectares are protected, a 47 per cent increase since 1990. These areas include, but are not restricted to, forests.

50. Niger reported dedicating 14.3 per cent of its territory as protected areas. In Liberia, the Government has earmarked 30 per cent of the country's forest cover for conservation. Following the pledge under the "Caribbean challenge" campaign, Grenada reported that its Cabinet decided to protect 25 per cent of representative samples of marine and terrestrial ecosystems by 2020. Germany established a forest and climate fund to promote forest adaptation to climate change and a national biodiversity strategy, with the aim of setting 5 per cent of forest area aside.

51. All forests in Germany and Finland are either protected or managed in accordance with sustainable forest management principles. Similarly, all forests in Madagascar have been zoned so that they are either included in the system of protected areas or are under sustainable forest management.

52. Finland, Norway and the United States introduced voluntary protection systems for protected forest areas in privately owned forests, such as the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland or a healthy forests reserve programme in the United States.

53. Cyprus, Côte d'Ivoire, Israel, Turkey and the United States reported new regulations and/or amendments to existing regulations with regard to protected lands. Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Nicaragua, Madagascar, the Philippines, Saint Lucia, Suriname and the United States reported on new programmes geared towards the improved protection of forests.

54. Nicaragua, Portugal and the State of Palestine reported on actions focused on forest fire prevention. Israel, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Turkey reported on activities linked to forest law enforcement.

55. Nigeria established a number of protected areas designed specifically for the conservation of forests. At the same time, however, owing to the lack of practical guidelines and management plans to regulate human activities in those areas, the country reported that progress in the conservation had been slow.

Progress towards sustainable forest management

56. In the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, countries were asked to report on the areas of forests considered to be under sustainable forest management. With no internationally agreed methodology on how to assess sustainable forest management, this was a pilot exercise in which countries submitted their best available data with national definitions and indicators on sustainable forest management. A total of 104 countries, accounting for 62 per cent of the world's forests, reported on the estimated areas under sustainable forest management for 2010.

57. There have been many positive trends at the global level, particularly in the past 10 years, but negative trends remain at the regional, subregional and national levels. While the area of planted forests has increased and conservation efforts are on the rise, the area of primary forests continues to decline since forests are over used or are converted for other uses.

58. A possible indicator for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management is the amount of forest area covered by management plans. In the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, 121 countries reported around 1.6 billion hectares of forest covered by management plans (around 52 per cent of the total forest area). It can be assumed that since not all countries submitted their reports that the figure could be much higher. Over recent years there has been a clear trend to increase the area of forests covered by management plans.

59. That trend is also reflected in the national reports. The area of forests under management plans among the reporting countries is slightly higher, around 54 per cent of the total forest areas reported.

60. Many actions reported by countries on attaining sustainable forest management and on progress towards global objective 3 were linked to forest certification and an increase in certified forests. At the global level, around 7.6 per cent of forests have been certified (Forest Certification Centre 2008), and the process is rapidly growing. The two main forest certification schemes are the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (247 million hectares) and the Forest Stewardship Council (168 million hectares).

61. Almost half (26 out of 53) of the reporting States indicated having areas with certified forests, mostly under the above-mentioned two main certification systems. In addition, Australia reported on the Australian Forestry Standard Limited, and Japan on the Sustainable Green Ecosystem Council.

62. In Australia, the majority of public native forests designated for multiple use are certified. Forest certification schemes play an important role in sustainable forest management on public and private forests, on native forests and plantations

and covering small (less than 10 hectares) to large (more than 3 million hectares) holdings. Canada had 150 million hectares of certified forest at the end of 2011. This is the largest area covered under third-party certification schemes (Canadian Standards Association, Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative) in the world, representing approximately 40 per cent of the world's certified forest area.

63. The forest sector in South Africa has engaged in a national initiative to develop a South African certification standard to be accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council. The draft standards were submitted to the Forest Stewardship Council under their existing principles and criteria. A timber certification committee was established in Myanmar. Morocco's eucalyptus plantations have been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, the certification process is under way and a national team has been established to carry on the work of adapting the Council's criteria and indicators to local conditions.

64. One of the most ambitious objectives of Viet Nam's forestry development strategy 2006-2020 is to certify at least 30 per cent of production forest areas, equivalent to 1 million hectares, by 2020. Germany reported on the use of public procurement policies to ensure that forest products came from sustainably managed forests.

Global objective 4: reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management

Financing sustainable forest management

65. Public domestic funding was reported as the main source of funding for forests. Over 90 per cent of the reporting countries stated that they had Government budgets specifically for forests. Half of the countries reported having funding for forests spread among other sectors. The two main sectors receiving funding for forests were nature conservation and agriculture, followed by issues related to climate change, water and energy. A couple of countries also mentioned education, research and rural development. Several countries indicated that the forest sector received separate funding from the annual budgets of their Governments.

66. More than half (53 per cent) of the reporting countries were able to significantly increase financial resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management, and in the case of four countries (Afghanistan, China, Nepal and Suriname), the increase was over 100 per cent.

67. Many countries indicated that the main challenge faced in forest financing was governmental budget cuts across all sectors. Since the budget for forestry comes mostly from public funding, the forest sector is affected by the current global economic crisis. Other common obstacles reported by several countries were a weak institutional capacity to effectively capitalize on funding. More than ever, forest-related issues are becoming scattered and influenced by different sectors. Some developing countries reported weak institutional synergies and a lack of focused and coordinated approaches/mechanisms as being the major problems in securing funding. Other challenges included the lack of political attention given to the issue, owing to an underestimation of the full contribution (all goods and services) of the

forest sector to national economies, insecure land tenure preventing private investments, the complexity of the procedures for accessing funds at the international level and declining funds from international sources.

68. With regard to external funding, in particular official development assistance, among the reporting countries, 15 were donor countries and 26 recipient countries (12 countries did not specify). Data related to official development assistance seems to be sparse. Only seven countries were able to provide data on official development assistance related to forestry for 2007 and 2011. Among the donor countries that reported, five increased and four decreased their official development assistance. Canada and Norway increased their official development assistance for the forest sector by over 100 per cent. It is difficult to draw any conclusions on trends in official development assistance based on such limited information, and it appears that at the country level there is lack of coherent data on official development assistance for the forest sector.

69. Several donor countries provided additional information on funding and in-kind contributions towards forest-related programmes, with many geared towards forests and climate change/carbon funds. For example, $A 273 million International Forest Carbon Initiative is a key contribution to global action on REDD+, France is aiming at mobilizing €250 million to fight against deforestation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Switzerland reported a contribution of 17 million Swiss francs to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility of the World Bank. Similarly, Canada has contributed US$ 41.79 million in fast start climate change financing in order to support climate change action in developing countries in the area of forests and agriculture.

70. Finland's contribution to international development funding in forestry is at the level of 4 to 5 per cent of total official development assistance. The actual expenditure was €31.5 million in 2010 and is expected to be around €45 million in 2012. Since 2007, Germany has further increased official development assistance for the conservation of forests and other ecosystems and will hold this at a level of €500 million per year. Japan's Green Fund, which consists of voluntary donations from individuals, groups, organizations and companies and was created to promote sustainable forest management and public awareness on the importance of forests, reached 2.5 billion yen in 2010.

71. For the United States, efforts aimed at mobilizing and increasing financial resources for forest management both domestically and internationally have been focused on leveraging partnerships and funding among the public and private sectors. In 2009, the country established a new bilateral United States Agency for International Development sustainable landscapes programme and new investments in multilateral finance mechanisms, as part of an international pledge of support for international forest conservation and REDD+.

72. Recipient countries reported on the domestic financial arrangements related to forestry and official development assistance. Ghana has mobilized significant foreign direct development assistance to support sustainable forest management. This has contributed to a substantial increase in official development assistance over the years. Under the current REDD+ initiative, there has been tremendous success in the mobilization of additional funding to support sustainable forest management, in particular to address forest degradation and deforestation. Government funding for sustainable forest management has increased in the past four years in Suriname.

Although official figures are not available, expert views indicate that while official development assistance declined during that period of time in Suriname, private foreign investment in sustainable forest management increased. In 2006-2012 official development assistance in Viet Nam also decreased.

73. Following are examples of various reported actions related to sustainable forest management financing:

(a) In 2011 alone, an equivalent of $11.7 million in forest revenue was collected by the Community Forest User Group fund in Nepal;

(b) Nicaragua's forest sector is now included in the credit programmes of Banco Produzcamos, which provides additional resources of up to $1.75 million for the establishment and management of forest plantations, sustainable forest management and community forestry;

(c) The forest authorities in Papua New Guinea are developing a framework for redirection of forest-based revenues, such as export taxes, levies and corporate taxes to the Forest Authority. The revenues will be used to fund improved forest management activities, with surplus provided as a dividend to the Government;

(d) In 2009, the President of Nigeria decided that 60 per cent of the Government's share of an ecological fund should be used for large-scale afforestation in the country;

(e) In 2011, Togo adopted a national forestry action programme, which has a financing strategy;

(f) South Africa's funding for sustainable forest management and various greening initiatives is supported by the private sector;

(g) In Ukraine, sustainable forest management activities are carried out under State and local budget sources, including from revenues derived from wood, wood products and services.

74. In Afghanistan, donor agencies and organizations, such as the United States Agency for International Development and FAO, provided major funding for the planning and implementation of sustainable forest management practices. Côte d'Ivoire forests are dependent on the State budget and external funding partners (mainly Germany). Myanmar reported that sustainable forest management-related projects were assisted by financial and technical support from Japan, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the Republic of Korea. Saudi Arabia is currently implementing a forestry project with financial and technical assistance from FAO ($3.5 million for 2011-2016).

C. Progress from a cross-cutting perspective

Capacity-building and technology transfer

75. Capacity development and the transfer of technology remain a serious challenge for many countries, and efforts are being made to address those challenges internally as well as with cooperation from the outside. Over half of the responding countries stated that they did not have adequate capacity and technology to implement sustainable forest management. The most commonly reported challenge was a lack of human resources, along with a lack of skilled professional staff in

various fields. Suriname reported that there was a structural lack of forest-related technical personal capacity at all levels in the country, that the lack of professional foresters presented an obstacle to adequate implementation of sustainable forest management by most of the forest companies and that students were not interested in making careers in forestry. That message was echoed by several countries. Others reported that obstacles included a lack of technology for forest monitoring and inventories, a lack of methodologies for valuation and payments for ecosystem services, weak governance and a lack of financing.

76. Close to 80 per cent of the reporting countries were involved in sustainable forest management-related technology transfers. A total of 18 countries identified themselves as donors and 31 as recipients of sustainable forest management-related technology. Technology transfers took different forms: multilateral projects, exchanges of experts and training that involved international organizations and donor countries. Frequently reported themes included mapping, monitoring and forest inventory systems, remote sensing technologies, projects on rehabilitation and afforestation, technologies in carbon stock enhancement, desertification and communal forestry/participatory approaches.

77. Three quarters of the countries reported having different forms of incentives to promote improved technologies for sustainable forest management. Some, such as China, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Saint Lucia and Switzerland, stated having various incentives, including certification schemes, tax breaks, subsidies and low-interest loans. Overall, however, certification schemes seemed to be the most common form of incentive among countries.

78. France and India mentioned that specific research institutes contributed to the improvement of technologies and provided training for sustainable forest management. In order to finance new technologies, technological innovations and infrastructure for technological innovations, Nicaragua established a special forest development fund. Papua New Guinea reported that the Government did not impose a tax on processed timber products. Any equipment imported from outside the country for processing timber was exempted from tax.

79. In the Philippines, the Development Bank offers low-interest loans for plantation development, and the Board of Investment provides incentives for private investors interested in engaging in industrial forest management agreements. Forest products obtained/derived within plantations covered by the agreements are free of forest charges, which are fees levied from industries and paid to the national Government for every cubic metre of timber or for other forest products.

Stakeholder participation

80. Almost all the countries (97 per cent) reported having programmes involving stakeholders in the formulation, planning and implementation of sustainable forest management policy. A vast majority reported having programmes at the national, subnational and local levels. Many provided detailed descriptions of existing mechanisms, forms and legislation with regard to public participation in developing and implementing forest policies/management plans.

81. Many countries reported following plans similar to Italy's, with the territorial forest plan being the most suitable management tool when considering the sustainability of the relationship between humans and forests and when

guaranteeing the safeguarding of community interests towards forests. The Philippines referred to public participation as a central tool for the successful implementation and pursuit of sustainable forest management. In Bangladesh, there has been a gradual shift during the past two decades from the traditional custodian role of the forest department to a more participatory approach in forest protection, conservation and development.

82. Cyprus reported the establishment of a forest advisory body comprising representatives from several governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies. The current Papua New Guinea Forestry Act provides that all relevant stakeholders must participate in the harvesting and management of the country's national forest resources. In Ghana, national, regional and district forestry forums have been established with representation from all the relevant sectors. In Grenada, the public involvement is predominantly through mechanisms that include community meetings; engaging schools; involving non-governmental organizations and other key institutions; national plant distribution plans for planting on specifically designated environmental days; and television programmes that promote best practices in sustainable forest management. In Japan, public hearings broadcast through websites and at expert consultation meetings serve to reflect public opinion during the development of a "basic plan for forest" and forestry, which will set policy direction on maintaining the multifunctionality of forests and on achieving sustainable and sound development practices in forestry. Liberia and Nicaragua established national multi-stakeholders steering committees.

Enhanced international cooperation

83. Over 90 per cent (48 out of 53) of the reporting States indicated that they were engaged in international cooperation on sustainable forest management, and all the countries indicated that they would like to see more cooperation. Thirty-one countries indicated engagement in North-South cooperation and 21 in South-South cooperation. Most other areas of cooperation mentioned were linked to law enforcement (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan), European Union voluntary partnership agreements, climate change/REDD+, livelihoods and poverty reduction. Valuation of ecosystem services provided by forests was indicated by 49 countries, followed by biodiversity; and forest degradation and rehabilitation (equally 46 countries); and monitoring and assessment of forests.

Public-private partnerships

84. The trend for using public/private partnerships to achieve sustainable forest management seems to be growing. Eighty per cent of the reporting countries reported having some form of participation mechanisms to engage the private sector, and 75 per cent indicated having established or strengthened public/private partnerships to advance sustainable forest management. Most Governments have realized the benefits of public/private partnerships and are supportive of private sector involvement and creating an enabling environment wherein the private sector can work jointly with the public sector in forest management, and the processing and trading of timber. The extent of engagement depends on the ownership of the public/private structure; however, even in countries where the Government owns the forest resources there is an outsourcing of forest management to private entities.

85. The partnerships take many different forms, including:

(a) Multi-stakeholder groups and round tables on sustainable forest management were reported by Nepal, Nicaragua and the United States;

(b) In Australia, the Forest and Wood Products Council, a high-level forest industry advisory body to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, acts as a means of liaison between the Minister and stakeholders in the forest and wood products industry;

(c) Most of Canada's forests are harvested by private companies; meetings between the Government and industry therefore occur on a daily basis in managing publicly owned lands;

(d) Finland and Portugal, where a majority of forest land is owned by private entities, emphasized the crucial role of the private sector in the implementation of sustainable forest management;

(e) Liberia reported on collaboration with all Government institutions, private organizations and civil society in policy decision-making at the regional and national levels;

(f) The Government of Papua New Guinea, jointly with the industrial sector, implements donor-funded projects promoting the legal harvesting and trading of timber;

(g) Rehabilitation programmes of degraded forest reserves in Ghana are implemented through public/private partnerships.

Science and research

86. Close to 40 per cent (21 States out of 53) reported funding designated for forest-related research. Of those countries, 14 had increased the funds geared towards science and research and 6 had decreased them. They indicated that the main source of funding came from the public sector. More than three quarters of the countries reported having institutes promoting the development and application of scientific and technological innovations for sustainable forest management, and 60 per cent reported having special extension programmes for promoting the use of scientific and technological innovations directed at forest owners, local and indigenous communities and other stakeholders. With regard to funding for science and research, Cyprus, Suriname and the United States mentioned difficulties in providing specific data, owing to the fact that many activities and programmes are funded and executed by the private sector and/or local communities. Liberia and Madagascar reported that almost all research activities were funded and conducted by local and international non-governmental organizations.

Public awareness and education

87. A majority of the countries highlighted the importance of raising awareness within the general public of the importance of forests in order to mobilize support for sustainable forest management and its contributions, including to economic development, employment, income, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability. The recently concluded International Year of Forests, 2011, helped to amplify existing awareness, promote national activities and provide a global platform for sharing success stories. Nearly all (51 out of 53) of the States reported

having organized events and activities in celebration of the Year. The Year provided an opportunity for civil society engagement and public events, helping to raise the profile of forests in public debates and in political considerations at the national level (see E/CN.18/2013/9 for further details).

V. Contribution of forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

88. The national reports have provided the Forum with a first-hand baseline assessment of the contribution of forests and sustainable forest management to the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals.

89. Under Goal 7, on ensuring environmental sustainability, the current Millennium Development Goals framework contains one official forest-related indictor (indicator 7.1) on the proportion of land area covered by forests. While the indicator provides a quantitative description on forest cover, it lacks a measurement for other important environmental services and functions and does not reflect the full range of socioeconomic benefits and services that forests provide.

90. In order to facilitate country reporting on the contributions of forests to the Goals, the Forum on Forests, at its tenth session, requested that the reporting format include information on how sustainable forest management contributed to specific Goals at the country level and on the indicators and data used.

91. Countries provided evidence-based analyses of the added value and significant contributions of forests and sustainable forest management to poverty eradication, sustainability and broader international development goals. The examples provided by the reporting countries revealed the potential of sustainable forest management and the forest sector in generating employment and supporting cross-sectoral solutions to address poverty-related challenges, including education and health issues in rural areas. The highest response rates were linked to Goal 7 (45 States out of 53), Goal 1 (33 States) and Goal 8 (28 States).

92. Response rates, however, varied considerably. For example, of the 16 developed countries that submitted reports, the vast majority responded solely to Goal 7 and a few to Goal 8. Only one responded positively to Goal 1. Explanatory notes were provided by two countries (Australia and Canada), stating that their commitments towards the achievement of the Goals were associated with work related to international development cooperation.

93. On the other hand, the response rate from developing countries was highest in respect of Goal 1, almost 90 per cent (33 out of 38 developing countries).

94. The lack of indicators and data on forests and livelihoods, and other socioeconomic aspects of forests were emphasized by several countries.

Goal 1: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

95. Nearly 90 per cent of the reporting developing countries noted how forests and sustainable forest management contributed to poverty reduction, assisting the most vulnerable people in managing their households. The reports indicated high value ratings (for example, "significant" and/or "crucial") to the role and contribution of

forests and sustainable forest management to poverty reduction and provided quantitative data supporting the statements, as in the following examples:

- Niger reported that 90 per cent of its country's household energy came from fuelwood, while 64 per cent of Nepal's population depended on fuelwood for cooking.
- Close to 85 per cent of Papua New Guinea's population lived in rural areas and depended heavily on forests for their survival.
- 70 per cent of Nigerians lived and worked in rural areas and relied on forests for their livelihoods, including income from jobs offered by the forest sector.
- More than 60 per cent of forest workers in Suriname were members of forest communities, which were the least wealthy people in the country.

96. All in all, forests were referred to by many as "safety nets" for the rural poor, through their provisions of fuelwood and a variety of non-wood forest products. In the past, non-wood forest products, including fuelwood were used for individual household purposes. However, recent information reveals a rise in such products in the informal sector market, for additional cash income.

97. Employment opportunities provided by forests were equally emphasized. Opportunities in forestry-based jobs as well as the direct contribution of forests to food security were considered critical to the livelihoods of the rural poor. The decentralized nature of the forest sector was underlined, referring to the fact that, for communities living on fringes of forests and often in such remote areas, forests provided the only possible source of employment, shelter, food and medicine.

98. The critical cross-sectoral connections between natural resources sustainability and poverty and hunger eradication were also highlighted. Recognition was given to agroforestry systems, which, in the rural communities of Ghana, the Philippines and the State of Palestine, are contributing to the enhancement of food security. Along those lines, Grenada, Myanmar and Saint Lucia emphasized the critical role of forests in safeguarding high-quality water resources for fundamental domestic use, including cooking and drinking, in rural areas. The grazing capacity provided by forest lands was mentioned. Roads and social infrastructure systems (for example, clinics, health facilities and schools) supported by forest companies were also mentioned.

99. National indicators to assess the contribution of forests to Goal 1 were listed by most countries; however, quantitative data are missing. The most common indicators reported by countries included:

- Proportion of households whose livelihoods and economies depended on forest goods and services
- Proportion of households depending on charcoal and/or fuelwood as a source of energy
- Employment generated in forest-based enterprises
- Family and community incomes from non-wood forest products
- Infrastructures (local clinics, schools, bridges, roads) sponsored by forest companies in remote areas

- Agroforestry systems, including indigenous technologies adopted in community-based forest management areas

Goal 2: achieve universal primary education

100. Over 50 per cent of the developing countries stated that sustainable forest management and forests contributed to the achievement of Goal 2, describing the interlinkages between natural resources, employment, infrastructure and education. For example:

(a) Afghanistan, Grenada, Guyana, Madagascar and Papua New Guinea reported on how employment opportunities in forests had allowed parents to be compensated for childcare and education needs;

(b) Guyana, Nigeria, Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), emphasized the contributions of infrastructure, such as roads and schools, sponsored by forest companies;

(c) In India, forestry institutions were reported to play a significant role in promoting primary and informal education in remote forested areas where access to education was not adequate;

(d) Liberia recognized contractual agreements signed with investors in the forest sector to ensure the provision of social services, including education, to forest-dwelling communities located close to operational sites. Similar arrangements were reported by Suriname, where logging companies are required to build schools, donate school materials and transport facilities for children of forest-dwelling communities;

(e) The Village Development Fund in Niger is funded by revenue from the forests and managed by communities. Local forest management groups use the funds for the construction and maintenance of schools and the purchase of supplies for students;

(f) The role of forests as green schools was highlighted in the reports of Saint Lucia and the State of Palestine. In the case of Saint Lucia, ecotourism was reported to have helped not only to support educational activities but also to provide a major boost for rural employment and the local economy.

101. The most common indicators for Goal 2 included the:

- Number of children in forest dependent families
- Number of children at the primary education level with parents employed in the forest sector
- Increased infrastructure (schools, bridges, roads) in remote areas by forest companies

Goal 3: promote gender equality and empower women

102. Almost 70 per cent of developing countries (26 out of 38) reported on Goal 3. The role of equal employment and training opportunities from the forest sector were highly recognized as an avenue for the empowerment of women. Forest-related policies also enhanced gender equality in forest management and decision-making

processes. In Nepal, for example, community forestry implementation guidelines required 50 per cent participation by women in decision-making bodies.

103. There were many examples of the role of women in forest-related activities, which are often the only source of income for families in remote areas, including:

- In Afghanistan, women carried out activities linked to afforestation and forest nurseries
- In Ghana, women are engaged in harvesting and collecting shea nuts
- Ecotourism activities in Saint Lucia, agroforestry in Papua New Guinea and harvesting of non-timber forest products in India depended on women

104. Family forestry is slowly gaining popularity for cash income-generation in rural areas of Papua New Guinea, and women are active partners. Family forestry practices, in which women are at the forefront, are replacing agricultural crops with forestry crops to restore soil fertility and provide protection from disease and pest infestations. The role of women in the forestry sector and their contributions to poverty alleviation continue to be underacknowledged. At the same time, in situations where forest resources become scarce, women play a vital role in maintaining and improving standards in rural households.

105. The most common national indicators listed by countries included the:

- Proportion of women who depended on forests products for livelihoods
- Proportion of women employed in the forestry sector
- Number of women with educational degrees in the forestry sector
- Average wages of women in the forest sector compared with those of men

Goals 4, 5 and 6: reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

106. Around 40 per cent of the developing countries reported on Goals 4, 5 and 6. The information submitted for those Goals were similar, and in some cases, overlapping.

107. Several countries emphasized the contribution of forests, specifically non-wood forest products, such as fruits, berries and bushmeat, as sources of protein and keys to healthy and balanced diets. Ghana, the Niger and Papua New Guinea reported that for many forest-dwelling and forest-dependent communities, the forest constituted their main source of medicine. Traditional herbs and medicinal plants from forests were regularly used to help maternal health and to reduce child mortality.

108. Approximately 28 million people use medicinal plants in South Africa, and over 65 per cent of the medicinal plants in urban markets come directly from forests or savannah species. Moreover, according to the reporting countries, about one third of medicinal plant material comprises tree bark. Modern research breakthroughs on drugs for HIV/AIDS and other major diseases rely heavily on forest genetic resources.

109. The following examples are relevant to Goals 4, 5 and 6:

(a) The role of forests in providing high-quality safe drinking water, which in Grenada and Saint Lucia has had a significant impact in the reduction of water-related diseases, and has contributed to reducing child mortality and to general improvements in the overall health among rural communities;

(b) Nigeria and Guyana emphasized the role of infrastructure supported by forest-based companies, such as medical facilities and roads, which have facilitated access to health care.

Goal 7: ensure environmental sustainability

110. Over 80 per cent of the developing and developed (44 out of 53) countries reported on Goal 7. As the Goal most reported on, it highlighted the key regulatory role of forests in global carbon and water cycles and the protective functions provided by forests for endangered species habitats. Many countries also provided details on their afforestation programmes and forest protection plans, where sustainable forest management provided the institutional framework and practices for the provision of ecosystem services from forests.

111. Following are examples of activities related to Goal 7:

(a) Austria and Portugal referred to all three pillars of sustainable forest management (economic, social and environmental) and to the interrelations among them, their equal importance and direct and countless contributions to human, economic and environmental security;

(b) Bangladesh, Jamaica and Nepal described ongoing efforts to increase their current forest areas;

(c) Countries with low forest cover stressed the role of sustainable forest management in reducing pressure from illegal logging, firewood-gathering, overgrazing, droughts and the conversion of open woodlands to marginal dryland farming and other factors. Sustainable forest management was reported as being effective in reversing the trend of forest degradation in areas where it had been implemented through community-based forest management;

(d) Protective functions of forests were emphasized, in particular by small islands and countries with a high percentage of mountain forests.

112. In order to assess progress towards Goal 7, the countries made use of national forest inventories and international and national sets of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. A majority of the countries reported using indicators on forest resources (area, volume) and their protective functions. Member States of the Montreal Process (for example, Australia and Japan) and of Forest Europe (for example, Italy, Norway and Portugal) made use of the criteria and indicator sets agreed within those processes. References were made to forests as carbon sinks and the specific sustainable forest management measures allowing the sequestering of more tons of carbon dioxide per year. The most commonly mentioned indicators included:

- Percentage of forest cover
- Area of forests under sustainable forest management

- Carbon storage in forest stands and carbon sequestration through harvested wood products
- Quality of freshwater supplies from forest areas
- Endangered forest-related species and protected forest areas
- Areas of forests managed for protective functions

Goal 8: develop a global partnership for development

113. Over 50 per cent (28 out of 53) of the developed and developing countries reported on Goal 8. Several countries reported their signatory status to international multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and provided descriptions of forest-related projects and activities implemented with international donors and agencies, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the Finnish International Development Agency, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the German Agency for International Cooperation. Additional examples included:

(a) Guyana and Suriname emphasized foreign investments in the forest sector;

(b) Ghana and Portugal reported the contributions of the forest sector to national Gross Domestic Product;

(c) Grenada and Saint Lucia stressed the importance of increased international attention to forests and the new strategies and programmes currently being developed within the frameworks of various international bodies. For example, Grenada has implemented sustainable forest management activities consistently within the elements of the programmes of work of the various related United Nations conventions and hence has contributed to the development of a global partnership for development;

(d) India underlined the cross-sectoral nature of sustainable forest management and its broad scope for integration within development programmes, which could be used to create global partnerships for sharing experience, knowledge and best practices;

(e) Papua New Guinea emphasized the increased role of forests and sustainable forest management in enhancing dialogue with civil society and in improving governance and market connectedness in globalized economic systems.

VI. Conclusions

114. Countries provided valuable information on how they have implemented policies and measures from the forest instrument, and to which extent. It is noteworthy that the total number of national reports received for the tenth session of the Forum is more than triple that of the previous two sessions.

115. Many of the instrument's provisions and measures are being taken into account in the design and implementation of national forest policies and dialogues. The

submitted information has enabled assessment of the progress made towards achieving the global objectives on forests.

116. There was a 0.3 per cent increase in forest cover between 2005 and 2010 in the 55 reporting States, indicating progress in reversing the loss of forest cover (global objective 1). This trend, however, does not reflect a global picture. Not all of the reporting countries have increased their forest cover.

117. Countries reported many actions with regard to global objective 2. The reports demonstrated that increasing attention was being given to the social and environmental benefits provided by forests. Examples provided by countries clearly demonstrated the direct contribution of forests to combating hunger and promoting poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goals. One of the challenges in this area was the lack of socioeconomic forest-related data; there is a clear gap of information on demographic trends linked to populations in forested areas as well as on the benefits to forest-based livelihoods and other related social dimensions. While the role of payments for ecosystem services mechanisms was noted, coherent data at the national level are missing. Since the full scope of contributions from forests is undervalued, and the socioeconomic benefits are particularly difficult to measure, the role of sustainable forest management in meeting broader development goals is greatly underestimated.

118. Progress has also been made towards global objective 3, with indications that the area of protected forests is steadily increasing. The area of certified forests is also rapidly increasing. While conservation efforts are on the rise, however, the area of primary forests continues to decline.

119. It was difficult to assess official development assistance trends for sustainable forest management, based on the submitted information. However, data presented in the 2012 study on forest financing by the Advisory Group on Finance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests showed a significant increase in official development assistance disbursements linked to global objective 4. Since funding for forests comes mostly from public sources, current budget cuts (across all sectors) and the global financial and economic crisis have been the main challenges to mobilizing funds for sustainable forest management.

120. Information reported by countries on forests and the Millennium Development Goals provided further evidence that forests and sustainable forest management make significant contributions to attaining international development goals. In addition, countries reported on assessment tools and indicators that will provide a useful basis for the next reporting cycle, in 2015, when the Forum will assess the international arrangement on forests.

VII. Recommendations

121. **In view of the progress made in the implementation of the forest instrument and the growing awareness, interest and relevance of the instrument in national forest policies and programmes and international cooperation, the Forum may wish to:**

(a) **Request the secretariat of the Forum to convene a technical expert group, among countries and international and regional organizations, to plan the reporting methodology for the eleventh session of the Forum, in 2015, on**

the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and to utilize the facilitative process to focus on that issue;

(b) Further encourage countries, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, international and regional organizations, and major groups, to initiate and support capacity-building activities, at different levels, to implement, monitor and report on the forest instrument;

(c) Further encourage countries to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination and interministerial cooperation, building on existing mechanisms where applicable, to advance implementation of the forest instrument;

(d) Invite FAO and the secretariat of the Forum to continue their collaborative activities on the implementation of the forest instrument, to assist countries in reporting progress, and to welcome initiatives to pilot the implementation of the forest instrument;

(e) Request the secretariat of the Forum to organize regional capacity-building workshops to support the efforts of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prepare voluntary reports for the eleventh session of the Forum and call upon donor countries to support those activities;

(f) Request the secretariat of the Forum to facilitate and catalyse, with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other international and regional organizations, the further incorporation of the provisions of the forest instrument and the global objectives on forests in their work programmes on forest-related financing mechanisms, organizations and initiatives;

(g) Request additional voluntary contributions for the Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests by all countries in order to support the efforts of the Forum secretariat in preparing the analytical consolidated reports and other background materials requested by the Forum for its eleventh session, to be held in 2015.